From: The IACP
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Greetings Jeremy Grimes

Thursday, July 11, 2019

POLICING & POLICY

Federal Officials Defend Use Of Facial Recognition Technology

The Hill (7/10, Birnbaum) reports, "Officials with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) defended the government's use of facial recognition technology before a skeptical House panel on Wednesday, downplaying privacy and accuracy concerns as overblown." According to The Hill, "Representatives with Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) sought to assure lawmakers there's no need to limit the agency's expanding facial recognition tech programs in airports and border areas. 'This is not a surveillance program,' John Wagner, the deputy executive assistant commissioner of CBP's office of field operations, told the House Homeland Security Committee during a hearing on Wednesday morning." Wagner "repeated the line multiple times, insisting...that CBP's face-scanning project – dubbed 'Biometric Entry/Exit' – is 'absolutely not a surveillance program'" but "the hearing also exposed how lawmakers are struggling with the issue, showing daylight between Republicans and Democrats over whether the federal government should maintain vast and growing facial recognition capabilities."

North Carolina Lawmakers Move To Toughen "Move Over" Law Penalties

The AP (7/10) reports from Raleigh, North Carolina, "The General Assembly is increasing the criminal penalty for motorists who violate North Carolina's 'move-over' law and a first responder dies or is seriously injured." The Senate "agreed on Wednesday to House changes to the bill, which responds to the December death of a Lumberton officer which occurred when authorities say a passing car struck him during an investigation." According to the AP, "The move-over law requires motorists to change lanes or otherwise slow down when they approach police cruisers with flashing emergency lights," and "the bill heading to Gov. Roy Cooper's desk would create a more severe felony when serious injury or death occurs, with possible prison time for someone with an otherwise clean record."

Spokane, Washington Police Department Participating In FBI's National Use-Of-Force Study

KXLY-TV Spokane, WA (7/10, Robinson) reports that the Spokane, Washington Police Department "is one of 16 Washington agencies participating in the FBI's National Use-of-Force data collection." According to KXLY-TV, "The data collection launched nationwide on January 1, 2019. According to the FBI's website, the data collected and reported will include any use of force that results in the death or serious bodily injury of person, as well as when a law enforcement officer discharges a firearm at or in the direction of a person." The collected data "will include information about the incident, the subject and the officer. 'SPD is continuing their commitment to transparency, the desire to employ "best practices" and therefore voluntarily chose to be a part of this program,' said Public Information Officer John O'Brien."

Data Link Milwaukee Murder Rate To Segregation

The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (7/10, Luthern) looks at "homicide in one of America's most segregated cities," reporting

that "recent data shows 70% of white households own their homes in the Milwaukee metro area compared to 28% of black households" – which "experts have said the disparity is a reflection of the area's segregation." A black Wisconsin resident "is 22 times more likely than a white person to be fatally shot," while by comparison in New Mexico, "a black person is only twice as likely to be fatally shot as a white person." In 2018, "Milwaukee's homicide rate was about 17 killings per 100,000 people. The rate for the city's black population was about 35 killings per 100,000."

Advocacy Groups Urge Florida Governor To Stop Developing Database Designed To Prevent School Shootings

The Washington Post (7/10, Strauss) reports, "More than 30 advocacy groups are urging Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis (R) to stop developing a database of detailed information about students that is intended to prevent school shootings, saying it could harm young people rather than protect them." A coalition of several civil rights, disabilities, privacy and education advocacy groups said in a letter, "We are deeply concerned that the program will be used to label students as threats based on data that has no documented link to violent behavior, such as data on disabilities or those seeking mental health care." The letter added that the database "could create a perverse incentive, leading students to avoid reporting serious or life-threatening behavior because they don't want to be labeled as a potential school shooter."

Las Vegas Police Release Report On Lessons From 2017 Massacre

The AP (7/10) reports, "Las Vegas police have released a report about what the department learned from the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history." Clark County Sheriff Joe Lombardo "said Wednesday that police now secure high-rise buildings overlooking open-air crowds and more officers have rifles and training to stop a shooter in an elevated position." According to the AP, "Also among 93 recommendations in the 158-page document is a policy ensuring paramedics and trauma kits are available at large-scale events." The report "comes almost a year after Las Vegas police closed their criminal investigation into the October 2017 massacre and nearly six months after the FBI summarized its behavioral analysis of gunman Stephen Paddock."

Massachusetts Bill Would Limit Public Access To Police Video

The Boston Globe (7/10, Wallack) reports that Massachusetts Secretary of State William F. Galvin "is raising alarms about a bill that would allow government agencies in Massachusetts to withhold all police dash-cam and body-camera footage from the public for any reason." Galvin "pointed out there are already exemptions in the state public records law for information that could potentially jeopardize an ongoing investigation or invade people's privacy," but "the bill sponsored by state Representative Denise Provost, a Somerville Democrat, would go much further, creating a new exemption in the public records law for 'any recordings made by a body camera, dashboard camera, or any similar device by a law enforcement officer,' including video capturing fatal police shootings. 'There is absolutely no need for this,' said Galvin, whose office helps oversee the state's public records law. Galvin wrote lawmakers Tuesday to raise objections to the bill. 'A blanket exemption undercuts the whole purpose of having bodycams.'"

ACLU Sues Massachusetts Over Facial Recognition Access

The AP (7/10) reports from Boston, "The American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts has filed a lawsuit seeking information about how the state transportation department uses its driver's license database for face surveillance purposes." The ACLU "said Wednesday it filed public records requests in February and April seeking more information, including about the sharing of the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles' database." According to the AP, "The transportation department issued a statement Wednesday saying the registry 'cooperates with law enforcement on specific case by case queries related to criminal investigations, but does not provide system access to federal authorities and is not negotiating to do so.'"

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COMMUNITY

Louisville, Kentucky Police Take Fresh Approach To Address Spike In Violent Crime

The Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal (7/10, Costello) reports, "Louisville Metro Police are refining tactics and taking a fresh approach to addressing a recent spike in violent crime, amid communitywide scrutiny around traffic stops, LMPD Chief Steve Conrad said Wednesday." According to the Courier-Journal, "Rather than 'traffic stop after traffic stop,' officers are getting out of patrol cars to talk with neighbors and conducting foot patrols in 'micro-hot spots' that can be as small as a single block in a neighborhood, Conrad said. 'Over the past couple years, there was a real focus on community contacts, and in many neighborhoods, that turned into just traffic stop after traffic stop,' Conrad said in a sit-down interview with the Courier Journal. '... We're absolutely still stopping cars, but we need to be out on the street talking to people.'" The Courier-Journal adds, "It's an effort to interact more with the people who know most about what's happening in 'challenging' neighborhoods: the residents themselves, Conrad said. 'They're going to know better than anyone,' he said. 'They live there.'"

CRIME & DRUGS

Twenty-Five Charged In Connecticut Drug Bust

The New Haven (CT) Register (7/10) reports, "New Haven police and federal authorities announced 25 members of an alleged drug dealing ring responsible for recent violence in the city were indicted Wednesday." According to the Register, "Those indicted are associated with the Island Brothers, a group once centered around Quinnipiac Avenue, Lt. Karl Jacobson said." Police "declined to share specific names and charges imposed in the round of indictments Wednesday, although they said drug and weapon-related offenses were included." Police Chief Otoniel Reyes "said the group is allegedly responsible for multiple homicides and shootings in the city and beyond, including 'the lion's share of the gun violence in the city.'" The Register adds, "The arrests Wednesday are a result of an investigation headed by the FBI's New Haven Safe Streets/Gang Task Force and New Haven Police Department, targeting drug trafficking and 'related acts of violence by members, former members and associates of the 'Island Brothers' street gang,' federal authorities said."

FBI Leads Sweep Of Violent South Carolina Drug Ring

WCIV-TV Charleston, SC (7/10, Emerson, Tripp) reports from North Charleston, South Carolina, "Ten people are facing federal charges after the FBI, SLED and local police busted a drug ring operating in the Charleston area, the U.S. District Attorney's Office in South Carolina announced Wednesday." According to WCIV-TV, "Nine of ten suspects, including a father and son, were arrested Wednesday after multiple agencies swept through Charleston County in an early morning raid dubbed 'Operation Lowcountry Line.'" WCIV-TV adds, "All nine suspects arrested Wednesday have since been indicted on federal gun and drug conspiracy charges," and "one more suspect is expected to be brought in by Thursday, U.S. Attorney Sherri Lydon says." Law enforcement officials "said Wednesday's arrests are tied to ongoing gun violence and drug activity in the Charleston area, primarily involving trafficking of heroin, cocaine and methamphetamine." The FBI's Violent Crimes Task Force "led the investigation, working behind the scenes with local law enforcement in the Lowcountry for two years now." WCSC-TV Charleston, SC (7/10, Phillips, Jacobs) also reports on its website.

Three Who Made Videos Boasting Of Drugs, Firearms Are Jailed In UK

BBC News Online (UK) (7/10) reports, "Three friends who made YouTube videos boasting about drugs and firearms have been jailed for related offences." BBC News adds, "Remi Carty, from Stourbridge, and Shaun Barnhurst, of Stirchley, Birmingham, were found with large quantities of class A drugs, a pistol and shotgun," and "a third man, Kyle Esty, from Birmingham, worked with the childhood friends, police said, and was jailed for drugs offences." The men "were jailed at Birmingham Crown Court on Monday," and "Det Ch Insp Ronan Tyrer, from West Midlands Police, said the men were acting together in a 'criminal enterprise of conspiring to supply drugs' and made videos together 'where they rap about shootings, cash, drugs and the police'."

OFFICER SAFETY & WELLNESS

Congressional Bill To Prevent Police Suicides Heads To President's Desk

The Kansas City (MO) Star (7/10, Lowry) reports, "A bill sponsored by Sen. Josh Hawley to prevent police officer suicides with expanded mental health services will head to President Donald Trump's desk." According to the Star, "The bipartisan bill authorizes $7.5 million annually over the next five years for suicide prevention programs and other treatment to assist officers and their families." Hawley "introduced the legislation following a Kansas City police officer's suicide in February," and "it passed the House by unanimous consent Wednesday afternoon after clearing the Senate without opposition in May." The Star adds, "Kansas City Police Chief Rick Smith was a vocal supporter of the legislation, writing in The Star earlier this year that the legislation would enable the Kansas City Police Department to hire mental health professionals to treat officers."

TECHNOLOGY

FBI Joins Investigation Of Richmond Heights, Ohio Ransomware Incident

WJW-TV Cleveland (7/10) reports that the Richmond Heights, Ohio Police Department "reports the Federal Bureau of Investigation is assisting them in an investigation into ransomware on a city hall computer." Richmond Heights police "first received the report on July 3," and "police say the 'infection' was contained."

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